131, 101 Kerala AW11

[Information on the regional divisions of the Indian sub-continent will be found in Chapter XIII, 6: Spate AW1 India.]

1:Gough-1 E-4, 5(no date)1954 AW11 Kerala AW11

[1] THE KINSHIP SYSTEM OF THE NAYARS OF MALABAR

I The Malabar Coast

(1) Physical Features

131 The Malabar Coast lies in the extreme south-west of India, along the shores of the Arabian Sea. The coastline is 360 miles long, the area 14,908 square miles. It is divided off from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the centre of the [167] area by the Palghat Gap. Though periodic immigrations have taken place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, the mountains prevented close contacts between the people who became established there [177] and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its position laid the area open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (1,000 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (5th century B.C.), Romans (1st century A.D.), Chinese (6th century A.D.), and after 1498 the Portuguese followed by the English, Dutch and French.

133 The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip, the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats.

[241] The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product is coconuts, with some rice and bananas. [2] In the southern half of the area it is broken by salt-water lagoons which for over 100 miles form a continuous navigable chain, parallel to 133 the sea. Almost all the chief towns (from north 361 to south, Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé,

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A W11 Kerala A W11
Central Kerala Nayar

conquests; that is, from 1342, the date of the first useful Arabic account (Gibb, 1929) to the end of the eighteenth century. My sources include English translations of the writings of Arab, Italian, Portuguese, Dutch, and French visitors to Kerala, works by English travelers, government servants, historians, and anthropologists, and a few historical works by Indian scholars who make use of indigenous Malayalam and Sanskrit documents.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship are not evenly distributed throughout the population. Some of the traditional institutions and relationships persist, especially in villages most remote from the seats of government and from modern market centers. Many other traditional usages are remembered by older people. Because of this, my own field work in three villages of Kerala—between November, 1947 and July, 1949—was able to provide me with the organizational framework into which to fit the literary material, and supplied me with many details on the traditional system not hitherto published.[2] Some information was also gleaned from genealogies, manuscript histories of particular *lineages*, and translations of Malayalam documents relating to land tenure, property transactions, and religious rites.

Modern changes in Nayar kinship comprise a large subject, which I have already briefly treated elsewhere (Gough, 1952*a*; see also Rao, 1957: 74–142). A full account will appear in a forthcoming book.

Ecology

Kerala, or the Malabar Coast, lies in the extreme southwest of India beside the Arabian Sea. The coastline is some 360 miles long, the area about 14,988 square miles. It is divided from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the center by the Palghat Gap. From prehistoric to modern times, migrations took place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, but until the coming of modern transport the mountains prevented continuous contacts between the people who became established there and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its position laid Kerala open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (from perhaps 800 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (ca. fifth century B.C.), Romans (first century A.D.), Chi-

[2] My field work in three villages of Central and North Kerala was made possible by the grant of a William Wyse Studentship from Trinity College, Cambridge, and of an Anthony Wilkin Studentship from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. The preparation and writing of these chapters have been carried out with the aid of two grants from the Social Science Research Council, in 1954 and 1958.

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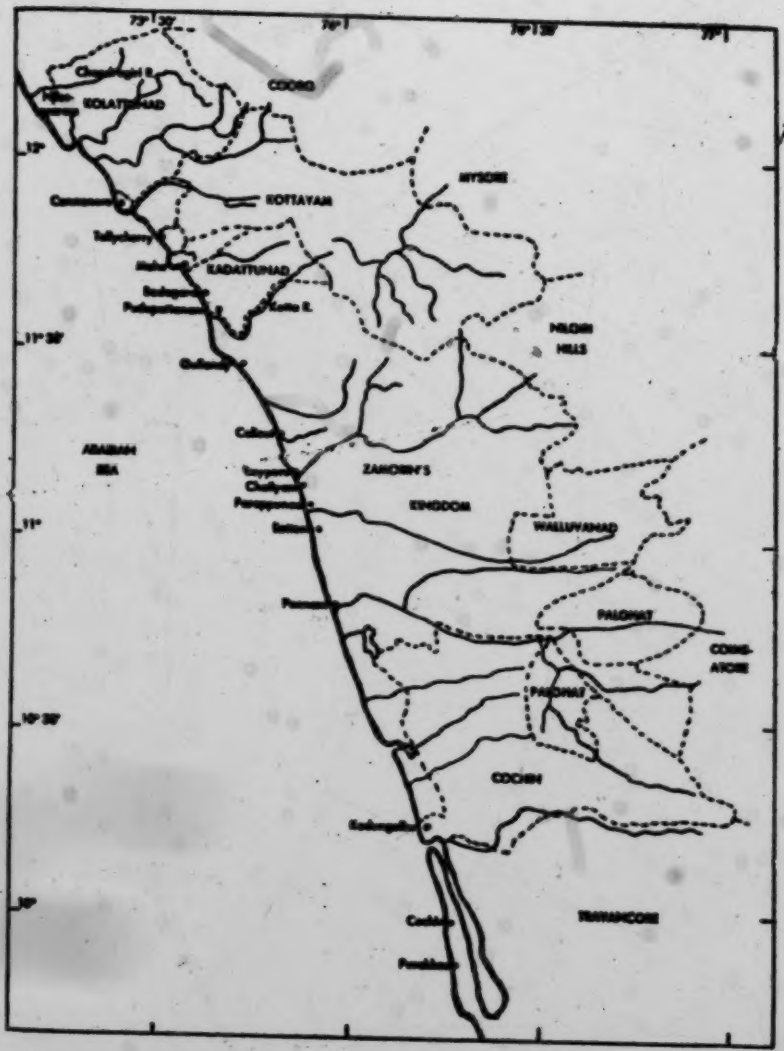

Fig. 6-1. Rough boundaries of the Kingdoms of Central and North Kerala in the mid-eighteenth century. (Adapted from C. A. Innes, 1908: 44–45.)

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
North Kerala Nayar

Nayar: North Kerala

The Nayars of North Kerala live between the Chandragiri and the Kora rivers. This area lay north of the Calicut kingdom and had been conquered by the Kolattiri kings at some period before the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 283; Innes, 1908: 57). It then disintegrated into the small kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. North Kerala was invaded from the Bednur kingdom of South Canara in the 1730's. It was later occupied by Muslim armies from Mysore between 1768 and 1792, after which it passed under British rule (Logan, 1951, I: 360, 399–473). This account deals with conditions before 1760, so far as these are known, and with the major changes of the nineteenth century.

Ecology

The mountains approach nearer to the sea in North Kerala than in Central Kerala. There are fewer stretches of lowland suitable for wet-rice cultivation, and gardens of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and spices on hillsides are more extensive. Since rice was the main subsistence crop, population density was lower than in Central Kerala. The houses of a village (*dēsam*) were scattered in gardens on hillsides surrounding a wet-rice flat in a valley. Villages were often separated by three to six miles of uncultivated scrub or jungle. Until the Mysoreans built roads after the 1760's, transport and communication by narrow mountain paths were difficult, especially in the heavy monsoons.

North Kerala had four major ports during the period of European trade—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, and Badagara (Hamilton, ed. 1727: 369–371). Pepper and other spices were exported from inland villages probably from Roman times, but villages were virtually self-sufficient for food until the mid-eighteenth century. After that time the Mysoreans' roads permitted greater import of goods both from the coast and from Mysore, and greater spatial mobility. In the nineteenth century cash-crop farming for export increased, as did imports of

6; Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900) 1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

796 Pishâri Kâvu which represents one of moderate im-
114 portance and truly one of the people, and its narration is fairly complete. It seems to express the religion of the Nâyars as it is when not tacked on to that of the Brâhmans: as they formulate it of themselves entirely in their own way.

796 An important local festival is that held near Palghat,
184 in November, in the little suburb Kalpâti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brâhmans from the east; but it is not a true Malayali festival and it suffices to mention its existence for it in no way represents the religion of the Nâyar. The dragging of cars on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath, at Pûri in Orrisa, to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar excepting only at Kalpâti which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar. The Kalpâti
782 festival is the only "car festival" in Malabar.

[131] Near Chowghât (Chavagât), about 30 miles to the
[346] southward of Calicut, on the backwater, an arm of the sea and separated from it by a thin strip of land between the rivers, at a place called Guruvayûr, is a very important temple the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited this festival on one occasion and saw there much which was of interest but which must find place in the account of regions of others
[126] than Nâyars. Here purchase was made of a few offer-
[532] ings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of vows. A very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man—the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by a silver
[326] string as long as the giver is tall! Goldsmiths working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of the temple ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering.

The subject of vows can be touched on but incidentally here.* A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatsoever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself (it is not necessary to go to a temple for the purpose of vowing) to give a silver image of a child, a silver

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[113] * The subject of vows generally, including description of a Roman Catholic shrine at Cochin somewhat akin to that at Guravayûr, was treated by me in an article which appeared in the 'Calcutta Review' for January 1899.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

121 [588] be elucidated only in terms of a psycho-analytic hypothesis. Part V of the essay is therefore an attempt to try out a psycho-analytic approach to Hindu ritual, and to show, with reference to one ceremony, that this approach permits a deeper analysis than is possible if we limit ourselves to a discussion of social function.

The use by anthropologists of psycho-analytic findings to interpret primitive myth and ritual is familiar from modern American writings; it has scarcely been accepted by British anthropologists. I admit that, for anthropologists, psycho-analytic theories must in the long run depend for their authority on analyses of a significant number of individuals in the society whose symbolism it is hoped to interpret. Such data are not, however, at present forthcoming, and in many Indian groups it is doubtful if they will be forthcoming before the myths and rites have died out. In the meantime, as I hope to show, the results of psycho-analytic work in the West can give us insights into the probable unconscious motives behind primitive religious practices, and allow us to formulate new if tentative hypotheses on the connexions between the kinship structure of a group and its religious symbolism.

[127] This essay therefore, while confined to the analysis of one ceremony, fulfils the terms of the Curl Bequest Competition, since it incorporates in a single theory field data recently collected on four Malabar kinship systems; uses the material of other anthropologists (see Aiyappan 1942, 1944; Dube 1953) who have worked on Indian initiation rites in the past ten years, to advance a sociological interpretation of these rites; and tests, with reference to these rites, certain hypotheses of the British school of psycho-analysis put forward in recent years.[1]

Part I. The Nayar *Tāli*-Rite in South Malabar and Cochin

635 175 564 184 [131] This area is in the centre of the Malabar Coast, south of the Kora River and north of the Travancore–Cochin boundary. Before 1792, it comprised the mutually hostile kingdoms of the Zamorin of Calicut, the Raja of Walluvanād, and the Maharaja of Cochin. The area was temporarily conquered by the Zamorins in the late 15th century and Cochin and Walluvanād were made feudatory kingdoms. Probably for this reason, the Nayar sub-castes of Walluvanād and Cochin correspond closely to those of Calicut, since they owed their existence to a political system common to these three kingdoms. By contrast, the kingdoms to the north and south, where the Zamorins failed to penetrate, had different political systems and correspondingly different hierarchies of Nayar sub-castes. Today, the Nayars of South Malabar and Cochin still show greater cultural similarity, feel greater unity, and intermarry more freely than they do with Nayars to the north or to the south.

175 613 564 635 At the head of each of the central kingdoms was a royal matrilineage. Being at enmity, the royal lineages disputed for rank, would not intermarry, and, though exogamous, formed each a separate caste. Each however acknowledged itself inferior to the Nambūdiri Brahmans (landlords and priests) whose separate caste-organization extended throughout the Malabar Coast, and who were above and outside the laws of the separate kingdoms.

175 564 631 613 Below the royal lineages came the Sāmantans, chiefs (*nāduvāris*) of districts (*nādi*). These owed allegiance to the Raja and had administrative control over the next sub-caste, of Kiriyattil Nayars (called Vellayma Nayars in Cochin), the headmen (*desavāris*) of villages (*desams*). Below the Kiriyattils came three parallel sub-castes: Sūdra Nayars, Charna Nayars (respectively called Illath Sūdras and Swaroopattil Sūdras in Cochin), and Pallichans. Sūdra Nayars were hereditary tenants and retainers in villages where the land was owned by a patrilineal family of Nambūdiri Brahmans. Charna Nayars were retainers in villages owned by *nāduvāri* or *desavāri* lineages. Pallichans owed similar allegiance in villages owned by a branch of the

[1] For the psycho-analytic interpretation of this essay I am chiefly indebted to Freud (1913, 1918, 1919), Ernest Jones (1931, 1951), Melanie Klein (1932), and Roheim (1950).

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar

588 564 178 collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambūdiris and rulers on the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even today Nayars remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambūdiri *genitors*, and boast that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

Part II. The Nayar *Tali*-Rite in North Malabar

131 133 361 [635] North Malabar lies north of the Kora River, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri, Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges, usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys. This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

175 631 [628] [627] Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nāduvaris* fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within the *nād*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

564 631 613 423 [614] Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars were Nambiars, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*, appointed by the Raja or the *nāduvari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged to the same sub-caste as other Nambiars. In most villages the land was divided between the Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south. *Nāduvari* lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived, employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves Samantan Nambiars. Nambūdiri Brahmans are fewer in the north than in the south, especially since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore. Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but Tiyyars and their washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

613 [701] [566] 591 613 594 [582] *The Nayar Kinship System.* North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private gymnasia of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead they cultivated their own lands with the aid of Tiyyar tenants, the serf castes being absent over most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband, and remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage his *tavaṛāḍ* property under the direction of his *kāraṇavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kāraṇavan* and her father, often to the *kāraṇavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

586 595 684 85 Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWII Kerala AWII

MAP I

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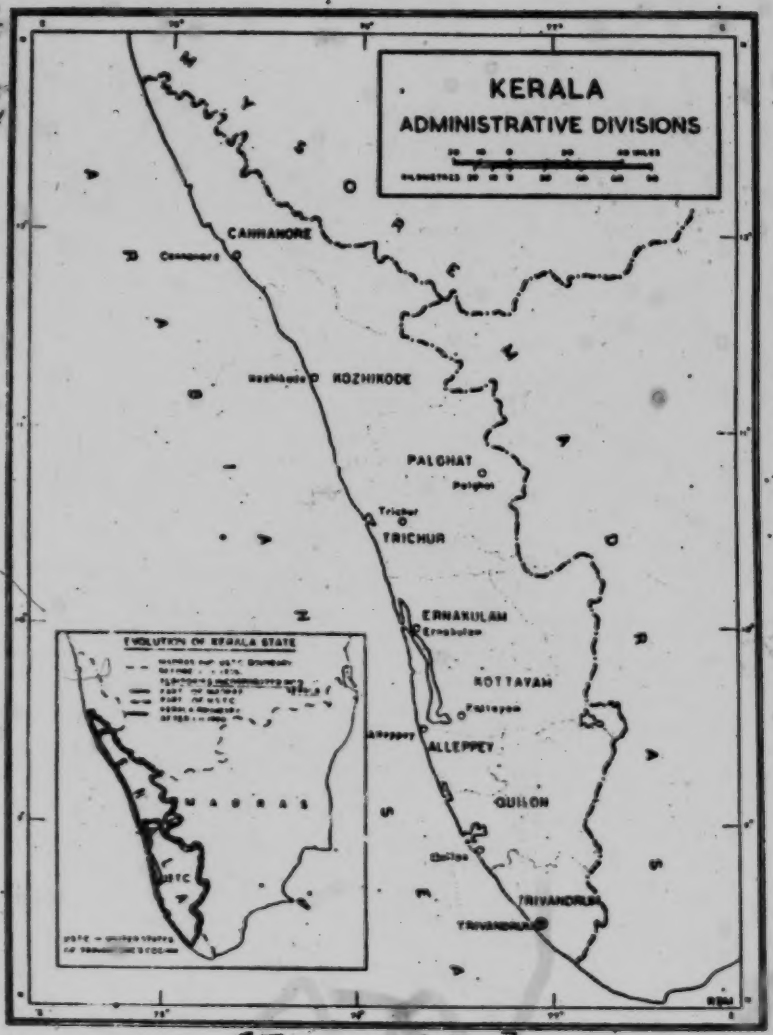


[Frontis Piece]
[facing p. 1]

Chapter 1

The Setting

KERALA IS THE smallest State in the whole of India.[1] It is a narrow strip of land along the western coast of India. It has an area of 14,992 square miles[2] and the coastal line is nearly 360 miles. The breadth of the State varies from 20 to 75 miles, as one moves from the extreme north to the middle. Its boundaries touch the State of Mysore in the north and that of erstwhile Madras in the east and south-east. It lies between 8°15' and 12°45'N latitude and 74°50' and 77°30'E longitude.

1.2 Kerala was created in 1956 at the time of the reorganization of the State through the integration of the erstwhile State of Travancore-Cochin and the Malabar district and the Kasargod taluk in South Kanara district of the erstwhile Madras State. At the same time Travancore-Cochin lost Kanyakumari, part of the Trivandrum district and Shencottah, part of the Quilon district, to Madras State. However, the net area of the State increased by about two-thirds after the reorganization of the State. Prior to the formation of Kerala as a separate State, Travancore-Cochin was administratively divided into four districts, while Malabar was a single district. At the time of integration, Malabar was broken up into three districts. Subsequently, during 1957 two new districts, viz., Alleppey and Ernakulam were carved out of the territory belonging to Trichur, Kottayam and Quilon. The State, therefore, now comprises nine districts. The total length of the State from its northern extremity to the southern tip is about 360 miles. But its width is nowhere more than 75 miles.

PHYSICAL FEATURES

1.3 The State territory may be broadly classified into three natural sub-divisions, the highland, the midland and the lowland. Western Ghats which range along the eastern border of the State form the highland. This is mostly a mountainous and rocky terrain ranging in height from 3,000 ft. to 8,000 ft. Anamudi, the highest peak of the Western Ghats (8,837 ft.) is located in the Kottayam district. The highland is thickly forested in its upper ranges, while in the lower ranges the forests are interspersed with plantations.

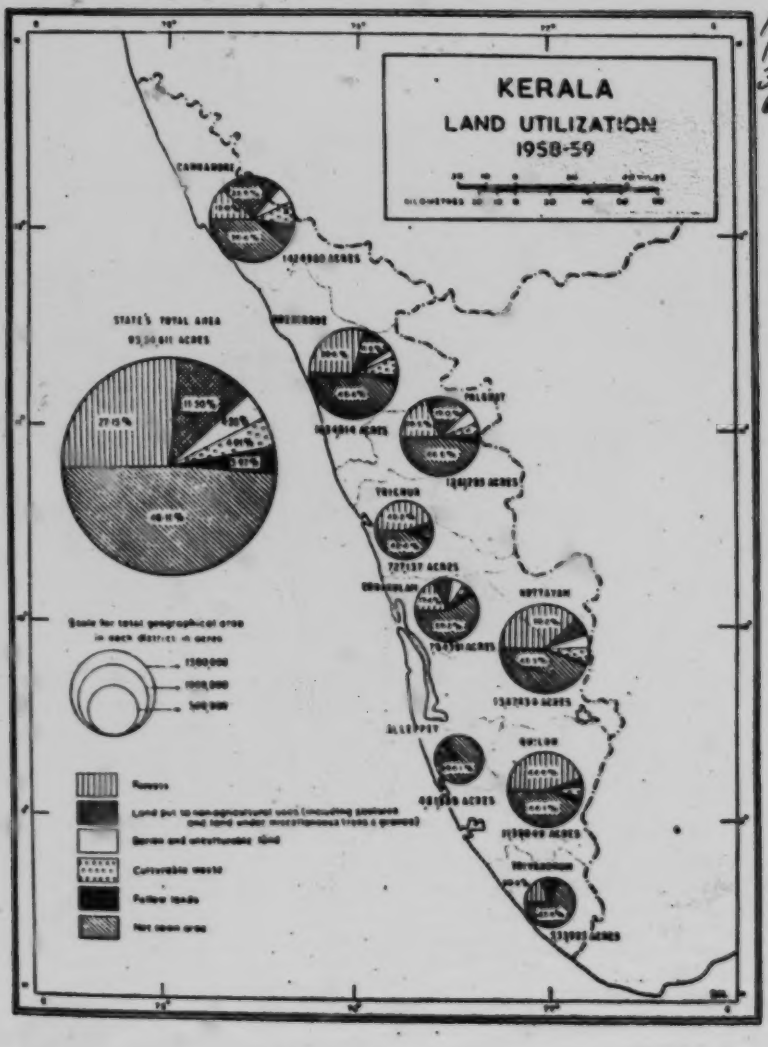
1.4 On the western fringe of the State are the lowlands which stretch along the coastal plain. Coconut palms, which cover most of this area, lend a richness to the landscape of the region. The soil in this plain is sandy. Coir-making and fishing are the two main occupations. Sandwiched between the lowland and the highland

[1] Excluding the Union Territories.

[2] *Statistical Outline of Kerala State*, Department of Statistics, Government of Kerala.

[P. 23]

MAP 5



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12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII

[p 159]
[PP. 1-158 not Processed]

CHAPTER 2

THE POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS (TIYAS), KAMMALANS, AND OTHER ARTISAN CASTES OF KERALA

Anthropological research in Kerala is not, and never has been, easy. Human society there, as we shall see from what follows, is extremely complex, being made up of innumerable Hindu castes, sub-castes and outcastes, to which must be added other non-Hindu communities, such as the Moslems, Christians, and Jews. To gain an insight into these, or even, as in our case, into only a section of them – namely those practising polyandry – is a painstaking affair, especially when one realizes, as one very soon does, that the customs of a single ethnic group are by no means uniform in the whole state and often vary radically from north to south. 114 184

The climate, too, is a problem. Most of Kerala is damp and tropical all the year round, with a very wet period during the summer monsoon from June to October. The record density of the population makes for poor and inadequate quarters in which to live. Communications are bad, the rainy season disrupting traffic quite seriously with floods and high winds because of the physical nature of the land, which can be described as follows. 114 [132] [161] [484]

A. KERALA, A DESCRIPTION

1. ENVIRONMENT

The State of Kerala stretches, today, from the boundary of South Canara in Mysore State in the north, to Cape Comorin in the south, the latter being the most southerly point of the Indian continent. It is an extremely narrow belt of coastland, only five miles wide at some points and never exceeding seventy at its widest, which is at the Palghat gap. It is bordered on the west by the Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean, in which are to be found the Laccadive islands, administratively part of the State, and on the east, by the imposing range of mountains called the Western 131 [133]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII

Ghats, the height of which varies between five and over eight thousand feet.

Before 1957, when the new State of Kerala came into being with the reorganization of the Indian States, the area included the large Madras district of Malabar, the French possession of Mahe, and the princely State of Cochin amalgamated with that of Travancore. The respective capitals were Calicut (today Kozhikode), Ernakulam, and Trivandrum, the French possession being limited to the town bearing the same name as itself.

All rivers in Kerala, except those of the more elevated taluk of the Wynaad, run from east to west, cutting the coastal strip into sections. Inland, however, vast stretches of practically stagnant water, comparable to lagoons, known locally under the name of backwaters, extend down the whole length of the State, affording uninterrupted communication.

Geologically, Kerala is a low tableland of red laterite and clay, fringed by a coast of alluvial formation. Laterite, from the name given to it by Dr Buchanan in 1800, is really a soil of decomposed gneiss, from which the Western Ghats are made. When dug up and left to the action of sun and rain, only the skeleton of hard material remains, sponge-like in appearance, from which blocks of building material are cut. It is not very resistant or long-lived, and gradually disintegrates into a red type of gravel, more or less finely granulated.

The resultant soil or loam is a well-balanced mixture of clay and sand, admittedly poor in organic matter, but well-suited to the special types of crops which have given Kerala its wealth. Thus rice, coconuts, pepper and betel, arecanuts, jack fruits, mangoes and cashews, do extraordinarily well in it, helped as they are by the damp, warm climate constant throughout the year. There are two monsoons in Kerala, the south-west monsoon of the summer, which is the principal one, and the north-west monsoon of the autumn which, lately, often fails.

In appearance, the landscape of Kerala varies very little from the coastal line to the towering peaks of the Western Ghats. Along the beach of fine sand, coconut trees in an unending perspective, raise their gently waving palm leaves in a manner reminiscent of the South Seas and of Ceylon. Jack fruit trees and mangoes behind them, being of a darker coloured foliage, give depth to the romantic scene. It is among these that the houses of the inhabitants of Kerala are to be found. Unlike the rest of India, human habitations are not grouped together here in villages and towns. Each stands isolated from its neighbours, in a garden-like compound surrounded by a stout fence of brambles or of

13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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Nayar

796 564 [793] garden fence at the seething procession in the lane below must be left to the imagination. It will have been noticed that the Nambūtiris hold aloof from the festival; they purify the temple before and after, but no more. 796 793 577 The importance attached to the various offices of those who are attached to the temple by however slender a thread, was illustrated by a rather amusing squabble between two of the Mukkuvans, an uncle and nephew, as to which of them should receive the silver umbrella from the temple, and bear it to the house of the goldsmith to be repaired. During the festival, one of them made a rapid journey to the Zamorin (about fifty miles distant), paid some fees, and established himself as the senior who had the right to carry the umbrella.

796 184 "An important local festival is that held near Palghat, in November, in the little suburb Kalpāti inhabited entirely by Pattar Brāhmans from the east. But it is not a true Malayāli festival, and it suffices to mention its existence, for it in no way represents the religion of the Nāyar. The dragging of cars, on which are placed the images of deities, common everywhere from the temple of Jagganath at Pūri in Orissa to Cape Comorin, is quite unknown in Malabar, excepting only at Kalpāti, which is close to the eastern frontier of Malabar.

782 [131] [346] [635] [126] [532] "Near Chowghāt (Chavagāt), about 30 miles to the southward of Calicut, on the backwater, at a place called Guruvayūr, is a very important temple, the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited the festival on one occasion, and purchase was made of a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of vows—a very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man, the giver. Symbolization of the offering of self is made by

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KERALA AW 11

K 131 595 596 428 591 Tiya Polyandry. The Tiyas, living in Malabar, exhibit one especially interesting phenomenon: they are a polyandrous people who are patrilocal (that is, the woman marries and goes to live with her husbands), but also matrilineal (that is, the property that they have—and they do not have much, because they are common laborers—is inherited from the mother's brothers). Unfortunately, I did not have much time to investigate these people because the war broke out when I had only been at work among them for three weeks. Thus, the only thing I could note was that they are polyandrous, patrilocal, and matrilineal at the same time. I should like to return and see how this works out.

Ti 123 To 123 K 123 *General Conclusions.* I am afraid that some of these results may seem superficial. I was unable to stay as long as I should have liked among all these peoples. I did not know any of their languages well, and to really do good field work, one would have to live among them and not put questions to them as I did. However, I hope to return and to do a more thorough study.

Ti 155 To 155 K 155 As far as the psychoanalytical results are concerned, I think that they are highly illuminating, though not sufficiently ample to be conclusive. There are strong indications that, broadly speaking, psychic mechanisms, libidinal development and mental structure may be identical to those in the West. There are, thus, numerous instances of trends pointing to Oedipus and castration complexes. What I, however, really investigated insufficiently was where we should place the relative borderline between what is specifically culturally determined in psychology (such as traits due to family environment) and what is generally humanly so (such as sociobiological traits).

K 595 182 To 595 182 Ti 595 182 As far as the ethnological results are concerned, these can be examined from two different angles. Functionally, polyandry fulfils the same purpose as all other marriages: it is a social institution for the satisfaction of the individual sexual in-

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

VATANAMKURUSSI VILLAGE (WALLUVANAD TALUK).

[*By N. Sundara Aiyar, Presidency College, Madras.*]

361 489 *Preliminary.*—The village lies in the interior of the district, thirty miles west of the municipal town of Palghat on the high road that passes from Palghat to Ponnani. It is to the north of the railway line passing from Calicut to Palghat, and about equidistant from the two railway stations of Shoranur and Pattambi on that line (South Indian Railway). It is fifty-four miles south-east (by railway) of the port of Calicut, the capital of the district.

361 131 The village is more or less surrounded by low hills on all sides, and there is a small forest to the east of it. A portion of the village has for its southern boundary the Bharata Puzha (called the Ponnani river, because it joins the sea at Ponnani). The river is of little use for navigation, since it is in flood during the rains and almost dry in summer. The railway passes through the village, for about a mile, though the nearest railway station is 4½ miles distant. The trunk road from Palghat also passes through the middle of the village. The village is roughly in the shape of a triangle with its apex to the north and the base on the south. Being in the midst of hilly country, dry soil abounds in the village, though the few wet acres are comparatively good.

162 *Population.*—The total population of the village in Census years was as follows :—

Year.	Occupied houses.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.
1891 ...	322	1,055	1,134	2,189	2,116	73
1901 ...	369	1,130	1,187	2,317	2,226	91
1911 ...	398	1,210	1,270	2,480	2,373	107

The figures include those of an adjacent small village, of which the total population in 1911 was 124, all Hindus.

564 There are Brahmans and Sudras, the latter split up into a large number of sub-castes and sects like the Nayars, Nambiyars, Menons, Chettis, etc., and the lower classes like the Thiyyas, or Ezhuvans, and the depressed classes of Cherumas, Pariahs and Nayadis. Nayars predominate in the village. There are a few Muhammadans, but no Christians at all.

Of Brahmans there are ten families comprising 60 individuals resident in the village. There are two families of Nambudiri Brahmans with some 30 members.

162 The great majority are Nayars, of whom there are about 150 families with nearly 1,500 individuals. Cherumas may number between 300 and 400, the Thiyyas or Ezhuvans about 500. The chief minor sub-castes in the village are Chettis (34), Kunparars (Potters, about 50), Asaris (Carpenters, 28), Karuvans (blacksmiths, 21), Thattars (goldsmiths, 19), Panans (makers of bamboo and palm leaf umbrellas, 29), Masons (13), Pariahs (42), and five families of Mannans, washermen of the lower classes, who also make mud walls, engage themselves as herdsmen and act as Pujaris, i.e.,